

Mr Nanak Chand Kaul stunned and silenced every one in the Camp. (Since we were far away from Srinagar, we were not actually aware of the reaction of the people there or even of our other Teachers as well as school students) At the same time it will not be out of place to tell you <sup>that</sup> Mr. Nanak Chand Kaul's swimming / diving skills were obviously proved by his not being engulfed by the stormy lake but coming alive to the shore along with another person. Such an indelible mark had he made on his Seniors like, Rev. Biscoe, Mr. F. Jacob, Head Masters, and other brethren Teachers as well as all school boys, that of all the Teachers he was in <sup>the</sup> vanguard to participate in the 'Duck Race' ~~on~~ the CMS School Boys in the Tuesdays regatta at Gagribal. He used to imitate as a duck by covering his head with lake weeds, thus concealing his identity from the surroundings. Paddle-rowed boats were ordered to catch the "duck" in the lake; but Mr Nanak Chand Kaul used to dodge them by diving in the inner layers of water. He would allow the boys to have his glimpse for a few minutes and again escape in the water in a diving pose. So, mostly the paddle-rowed boats failed to catch him. Rarely, when a boat ventured to catch him, that requisite boat was declared as the Victor. Thus, Mr Nanak Chand Kaul acted as a 'prize catch' "DUCK", ~~got~~ the race christened as "DUCK RACE" for the participating boats. Hence, Mr Nanak Chand Kaul was nicknamed as "Nana Batak" in Kashmiri, and came to be known as so till his death and even thereafter. He was, otherwise, a tall (height 6'4"), with robust body and always a smiling face. I personally knew him, as the words of Teachers received love and affection from them all. Sometimes, when Mr. Nana Batak used to be rarely absent, my father, Mr. Rugh Nath Zalpuri, played the "Duck" at the Tuesday Regatta. After the death of Mr. Nana Batak, Mr Rugh Nath continued to play the "duck" as and when called upon. Reader! At a later point of time I will display before you the photographs of the two "Ducks" with their relevant aquatic and other specialities.

After sending the two departed ones for their cremation to their <sup>residences</sup>, it appeared that the question of continuing to stay at

Ningal was receiving attention of Rev. Biswe, Mr F. Jacob and <sup>the</sup> Senior Teachers. This topic <sup>also</sup> formed an item of chat of the Visiting Teachers with Mr. Tara Chand, my Uncle, who, in turn, had already revealed this fact to the elders including the Boatman in our Doonga.

One fine day, it appeared that all the Boats left the halting point viz. Ningal for good and made about turn. Obviously, they would have crossed the lake to be reverted to another Base Camp viz. Baniyar, our starting spot ~~from~~ <sup>now</sup> crossing the Wular Lake. Nothing I remember about this return journey. I can guess one fact only i.e. the probable date of setting our anchor at Baniyar. As the date of finding the two deceased bodies and also sending them for cremation on that very date ~~was~~ 13. 4. 1934; our return journey might have been performed immediately after this date. Another probability is that the group of Boats might have left Ningal while all of us were asleep. Only, when we neared the second halting place, after crossing the Baniyar Nallah, I realised that the Second Base Camp was Baniyar itself on the bank of the River Jhelum, before it merged with the Lake. Reader! I feel it is imperative for me to say some words about this place because, our stay here might have been roughly about <sup>half</sup> a month, as programmed, to wait and watch till the last dead body was sent for cremation. Baniyar was a spacious stretch of ground spread over with grass patches bounded by Baniyar Nallah in the West and the vast Lake Bank on the East. On this portion of land lived the 'Gari - Hang' (water nut gatherers) housed in 'Bahatch Boats', a crude form of a Doonga, having good spacious floor in front portion. These Bahatch-wallas formed themselves in a trader class, collected (from the Lake Bank), dried (on the vast adjoining land), stored (in the Bahatch) and marketed the gari (water nuts), also called 'Singharas' in whole sale trade. But, look Reader! we stayed in the Boats, invariably, tied to fixed points on the bank of the River. Actually, we formed the other habitation group opposite to the Gari - Hang basti on the other side of the Baniyar Nallah. The tragedy of loss of the Seven Young Lives was already known to all, but the deficiency amongst the 'flock' of Boats was conspicuous as one of our Six-Cared Boats' paddles were

destroyed and "eaten up" by the Wular Lake, the 'monster' in storm. It reminded us all <sup>on our return journey</sup> ~~every~~ now and then.

During our stay at Baniyar certain interesting happenings took place. Every day, one witnessed that roughly at about 10.00 am in the morning groups and groups of the small roofless shikaras about 40-50 in number arrived and entered the Lake at Baniyar itself. Every Shikara was managed by two persons having their own paddles and carrying with them a 'Narueeh', or 'Kashmiri' word for a smooth round medium sized wooden rod with a lump of long nails ~~tips~~ pointing outwards and fixed on one end of the rod, while the other end is kept in the grip of a human hand. When the shikara moves on the surface of the water, the persons therein keep a concentrated watch on the fish that swim hither and thither in water of the Lake; River or a stream. As soon as the fish was sighted by the persons, the 'Narueeh' was instantaneously thrust on it. Sometimes, fish could be caught in this way as the nails would pierce it and thus it gets caught. It was planned that, if by any chance, a drowned body was thrown up from the bottom of the Lake and floated in mid water or on the surface of the Lake, the shikara-wallas who sight it should catch it and get it mounted on the shikara itself to be carried to the Camp site and handed over to the school authorities for further disposal.

The shikaras used to churn the Lake during the day and returned to their abodes by evenings. Wind blowing, it was learnt that every shikara was paid a four-anna (Twenty five paise of the present denomination) <sup>piece</sup> for each trip. Unfortunately, this exercise brought no dividends.

After a few days of halt here, at Baniyar, we were surprised, <sup>one day</sup>, by the unexpected and abrupt visit of my father, Mr. Rugh Nath Zalfwari, long after our lunch. Being briefed by Mr. Tara Chand (his Brother) and his colleagues, he went straight to the Principal, Rev. Biscoe, Vice Principal, Mr. Fredrick Jacob and other Senior Teachers. While he was on this mission, first human being he came across was Mrs. Biscoe and then all others. As revealed by my uncle, my father had felt very anxious to see for himself the misery that over-took all and also to

(41)  
offer his heart-felt condolences to all from Rev. Biscoe down to a junior Teacher. While my father was with the group of his hosts, astonishingly, a drowned Teacher's corpse was brought by one of the roofless shikaras from the Lake-side. Immediately, Rev. Biscoe sounded my father to escort the body to the cremation ground at Chhetabal (Noor Bagh) and have the last rites performed there. It was really a pitiable task - viz. to escort the dead body in the roofless shikara to cremation grounds about 35 km away in reverse current direction; to keep the body under the custody of the cremation ground authorities and set out for the deceased Teachers' home to break the news of the arrival of the body; to return with the kith & kin to the cremation grounds and finally performance of last rites of the departed soul by his kith and kin. Then the escorting person was free to go his own place. On returning from Rev. Biscoe my father left a word with our Doonga people for some eatables in a tiffin pack and also a bag containing two / three quilts. He then proceeded straight to the Shikara advising the Boatmen to cut <sup>enough</sup> branches from the willow trees nearby to make a floor-bedding in the shikara for the escorter, the dead body and one among the Boatmen. While my father returned to the Doonga early, he was advised by Mr Tara Chand (his brother) to make best use of time, as the night was on one's head. He took his bag of quilts, tiffin pack and also a kerosene lantern. I remember well even now how my father supervised the Shikara-walla's work for making comfortable floor-bedding. We came out of our Doonga to say hello to him. The Boatmen had to pick up their eatables in the way. Thus, my father departed from us - as if, he came with a wind and left with a storm. I do not know and can also not visualise what happened thereafter but one thing was certain that plying the Shikara in reverse-current direction and during

the night time was a stupendous task. So shocked and gloomy was Rev. Biscoe that he used to roam about on the roof of his House Boat during the day. Particularly, after lunch for about 3/4 hours I watched him and found that he used to observe keenly and attentively the Wular Lake surface with his binoculars for days together. This enabled him to locate a corpse, if by any chance, floated on surface of the Lake. One day when he was engrossed in his binoculars' watch, I recognised two Kashmiri (one in a suit and the other wearing a dhoti) Pandit Leaders, namely Pt. Kashyap Bhanderu and Barrister Pt. Jia Lal Kilam (late C.J., J&K. High Court) coming on foot towards Rev. Biscoe's House Boat.

On seeing them coming abruptly and unexpectedly, I noticed Rev. Biscoe coming down from the roof of his House Boat. He welcomed them. Then all the three talked amongst themselves. A word went round later that they offered Rev. Biscoe their sincere condolences on behalf of the Kashmiri Pandits' Sanatan Dharan Sabha and on their own behalf. As understood later they had also very cordial and encouraging talk. It appeared that Rev. Biscoe got thrilled by their co-operative attitude. This formed a chat topic in our Doonga, when the Teachers etc. visited my uncle for gossip, for some days. But Readers! If your birth dates are post 1935 or so, then it is a must for me to explain to you the 'Kashmir Turmoil' of the concerned period, which I will do later separately. For the time being it will suffice to say that the Kashmiri Pandits, a tiny ethnic minority in Kashmir suffered severe devastation, destruction of property, loot, arson, rape etc. during the communal frenzy in 1931. They realised the need of the hour when they reorganised themselves in cadres and also established a leading body known as the Kashmiri Pandits Sanatan Dharan Sabha, the then President and the then Secretary, respectively, of which visited Rev. Biscoe at Banayar as explained above. Finishing with their visit topic, the other astonishing events will now follow.

Next, another awful experience with me, one day, was when I was roaming on the River Vitasta's bank in Banayar, I saw a roofless Shikara coming from a distance having a red object in it, racing towards us. As soon as it neared us, I sighted a dead body of a Teacher with the 'Red-School Blazer' and Khaki Shorts on. On the left pocket cover, our 'Motto' embroidered on golden brocade (covering the pocket) was conspicuous. This drowned man was swollen beyond one's imagination with his clothes put on, having their stitches torn. It was a very frightful scene for me - a boy of plus eight years of age - when I saw blood having oozed from his eyes, ears and nostrils. Its clothes, its all limbs, its face and its

its fingers and toes were full of the Lake-bottom mud. The departed soul - as recognised - was that of Mr. Tara Chand Gunjoo. Immediately, arrangements were made to send it off to the cremation ground (Noor Bagh). From the bank of the River I came into the Doonga and described to both the Ladies (my mother and my aunt) the condition of the deceased body. While doing so, I asked my mother how the clothes on the dead body of Mr. Tara Chand can be removed for performing his last rites? A perception that a Scissors is not used to cut and untie the clothes of the dead - a superstitious explanation to avoid any harm to the body - was haunting me throughout the arrival of the deceased body and, therefore, my insistence for a reply from my mother. She had, therefore, to make me understand that in a rare case, as the one before us at that point of time, there was no other alternative but to apply the Scissors for the job in question.

At Baniyar Camp, our Doonga experienced a peculiar incident. Every one in the Doonga retired to sleep one night as usual. In the early morning a Shikara with a few passengers in it observed that our Doonga was in a floating state, it had tilted very deep on the one side. This meant that with passing of some more time, the Doonga will over flow with water and get sunk. It would have created a terrific situation. The Shikara travellers cried so hoarse that all of us got up within no time. Every one in the Doonga learnt <sup>about</sup> the precarious situation and became alert and active. Our Boatman took no time to save the situation. My uncle also rose to the occasion and directed the 'operation safe Float'. Whatever was stored or put in the Doonga or at the other appropriate places was taken out. When the Doonga came to an 'Empty state', all the water which had ~~gushed~~ gushed in the Doonga, was poured out through utensils, canes, rugs etc. Actually, it was a mischief of a naughty mouse who had made a hole in the bottom of the Doonga

through which the water rushed in the Doonga. The mouse had been free to feed itself on plenty of eatables in whatever form they were stored. This hole was ultimately plugged by the Boatman carefully to avoid any recurrence in the future. Then and there each and every article was placed in its rightful place and state. So, our Doonga was again in an OK position.

Perhaps, when two or three days passed, as I remember, we saw again that my father was coming towards our Doonga. While he was in conversation with Mr Tara Chand, his brother, it transpired, that he was sounded likewise. He had already paid his courtesy call to the Biscoes, Mr. Jacob and other senior Teachers and his contemporaries. He might have rested for some time in the Doonga, when he related how he along with his brother (Mr. Nila Kanth) (as both had stayed back at home on our Wular visit) passed these days quietly and in solitude. Again after an interval, by sheer coincidence another drowned body mounted on a Shikara had arrived. My father was sent for by Rev. Biscoe and asked to repeat the same ~~exercise~~ drill as in the case of earlier corpse. So, within a few hours he again left us behind to discharge the duty assigned to him.

During our stay at Baniyar to this point of time, four out of seven deceased bodies were found and sent to the Cremation ground at Noor Bagh - Chhatrabal. As such, three dead bodies still remained to be got retrieved and sent for their disposal. The matter being as old as about 67 years, it is not possible for me to remember for how many more days we stayed at Baniyar and moreover who escorted the remaining three departed ones for their last rites. It is my guess that our stay at the Base Camp Baniyar might have been of about ten days or so. I must tell you that the Teachers etc. here did not always remain confined to their boats. Instead they moved in groups, one lead by Mr. Fredrick Jacob and the others by the Senior Teacher Mr. Bakaya. They used to go on foot or in boats. Perhaps, the task given to them was to find out if there was any clue leading to tracing out a dead body. We youngsters in the Doonga had also our free time. We also formed groups among ourselves and used to play. There was a strict instruction for us not to move near the waters of the River Theelum or Baniyar Nallah. Mr. Narayan Too, my cousin, being elder to us always used to share his time and gossip, particularly, with the junior Teachers etc. In fact, he was found always in their company.

Reader! one most important question has not come up for consideration or discussion. I mean, it is the matter pertaining to the total expenditure on this catastrophe. Just think analytically. First of all about 40 to 50 shikaras sent on an errand to churn the lake for about <sup>ten</sup> days were to be paid a four annas piece each day. Then, out of these Shikaras, the one, who was able to seize a defunct body from the lake, got it mounted on the Shikara for handing it over to the School authority, was, perhaps, suitably awarded. Further, the Shikara which carried the deceased body along with the escort and the other paddler in the reverse current direction for about thirty kms. (even though escorts' services were free) to the cremation ground had to be given its due share. Not only this, perhaps, as last item, the cremation expenses for seven young persons were to be paid to the cremation ground establishments.



Added to this was the problem of seven families (whose bread-earners had lost their lives in Wular Lake's furious storm) for the time being till a final arrangement was made. I have given you a rough idea of the enormous expenditure involved. Who bore this heavy burden?

It is my guess that though the cremation costs might have been met by the respective families, the rest of the money spent upto and including the despatch of the dead bodies for the cremation and also the monthly maintenance expenditure of the affected and needed families <sup>till suitable times</sup> ~~a heavy burden~~ of considerable measure would have been shared by a magnanimous and humane god in the person of Mr. C. E. Tyndale Biscoe. This much only is not enough to say about him. He was close to the Teachers

numbering more than one hundred and <sup>and</sup> his staff members running upto say thirty or so and vice-versa. As I have earlier stated that this was not the case <sup>only</sup> with his Teachers and Staff members but he was quite familiar with the members of their families also. He spent enormous <sup>sums</sup> ~~sums~~ for the upliftment of the latter. They also received selective attention in the Mission Hospitals, if and when, they fell ill. Sometimes, I get puzzled if I recollect my boyhood days. I remember certain occasions when I, along with my mother, visited, several times, the precincts of Rev. Biscoe's residence, gardens and playgrounds. The trips were for merry-making. I used to wonder to see many other contemporary families (ladies and children), some of them already known to me present at that place. Clearly, it indicated that all or us were invited to partici-

pate in the gathering. There were a number of games for youngsters like house/school/post office building <sup>visual aid games,</sup> football etc. The Toy packets were kept hidden under the leaves of trees. Those who were able to search them out became their masters. The ladies used to come putting on their phirans, head gears and "loongis" (long <sup>cloth</sup> but of medium width) tied round their waists to enjoy the games of badminton and also took part in "potato" race and "bag" race. While we, the youngsters, mixed among ourselves including "Huge" and "Anne" — son and daughter <sup>respectively</sup> of Mr. Eric Biscoe. Our hosts were Mrs. Biscoe assisted by her Daughter-in-law (Mr. Eric's wife) and Miss Mallinson. Usually tea with biscuits, cake pieces, chocolates and snacks was served to all. At times, youngsters were given some gifts on their departure. It was invariably a practice that all youngsters were specially invited for Christmas function. They were entertained to a sumptuous tea. After that, they had to gather in a dark room. When lights were put on, a very beautiful scene <sup>was</sup> of the X-MASS TREE to which were attached gifts of different kinds, having name-labels stitched to them. The names of the boys were called out by a member of the Biscoe family present (and in-charge of the X-MASS TREE). He walked upto to the in-charge who, in turn, gave him his allotted toy <sup>pack</sup>. In this way, all the boys were given their presents, one by one. So, the crowd in the room, by and by, got thinned out enabling every boy to leave for his home with his escort. Reader! I will unfold before you a remarkable feature in Rev. Biscoe's character. If anyone of the Teachers / staff members remained absent from duty due to illness and was abed, which fact, as soon as, it came to his knowledge, he on such occasions rushed to that person's home abruptly and without intimation. He extended all the requisite help to such persons. I have knowledge of two such incidents. One relates to

Mr. Aftab Kaul (Brother of Mr. Tara Chand) father of Mr. Dwarika Nath, one of our Doonga members for the Wular Lake trip, about whom I have already enlightened you in the beginning. When Mr. Aftab Kaul attended the celebration of a ceremony at our Rainawari House he stated that he was a staff member in Rev. Biscoe's office for a considerable period of time. During this service period Mr. Aftab Kaul remained absent because of sickness. He sent in an application to the Office for granting leave. When this fact came to Rev. Biscoe's notice, he immediately rushed to our Rainawari House on his <sup>\*</sup>bicycle without informing Mr. Tara Chand, my uncle, or my father (Mr. Rugh Nath Zalpari) to see for himself the condition of the patient. Every one in our house was puzzled to see Mr. Biscoe. He enquired about Mr. Aftab Kaul's condition and returned to Sheikh Bagh on his bicycle. Another occasion concerned Mr. Tara Chand, my Uncle. Perhaps, it was in May, 1937, when Rev. Biscoe paid a visit to our Rainawari School of which I was one of students in those days. I remember very well that the Head Master, Mr. Kamth Kaul Jalla, sent for me and told me quietly to go to our residence as Rev. Biscoe will pay a visit to Mr. Tara Chand, who had developed a severe infection due to a drum burst of his left ear and was abed. The cause of this injury was, probably, due to a sudden and loudest burst in the engine of the motor-launch which was taken to Wular Lake, as usual, in March, 1937. From my School, I rushed to my house and borrowed a stiff and strong broom from gujjars in our neighbourhood just to clean the courtyard of our house by removal of superfluous tit bits here and there. Suddenly, Rev. Biscoe appeared on the scene. So, I had to escort him to the room where Mr. Tara Chand lay abed. By chance, Mr. Narian Joo, my cousin, was also present. While Rev. Biscoe asked Mr. Tara Chand about his health condition to which the latter gave the required reply. Then Mr. Biscoe's second question was "Who is taking care of you?" Mr. Tara Chand's apt reply was "Narian Joo", though self and my two brothers left no stone unturned to give Mr. Tara Chand our sincere services which he always acknowledged before his own children.

\* It is said that in the beginning there were only two bicycles - one with Rev. Biscoe and the other with Mr. Narian Kaul (Naar Narian) at the point of time in question.

I will tell you another glorious catch of the personality of Rev. Biscoe. In the case of those families, whose bread-earners expired in some accident, or ~~other~~ catastrophe or else because of natural death in a very young age, Rev. Biscoe's personal attention always got focussed on them. He never faulted in any ~~help~~ requested/required. Every time it was a general talk that the families of those young-men, who perished in the Wular Lake Storm of 11.4.1934 enjoyed his special care. I learnt it from my mother in 1940 or so that one of such persons' <sup>houses</sup> ~~house~~ was in a delapidated condition. It came to the knowledge of Rev. Biscoe's <sup>Son (Mr. Eric Biscoe)</sup> who immediately ordered for its repairs etc. bearing total expenditure on this en-

There is another incidence of a similar nature. On my constant rapport with a few connected brethren in Delhi, I had the opportunity of talking to one Pt. R. N. Ganju (of Lajpat Nagar - Tel. No 6174146) s/o Late Pt. Tara Chand Ganju, one amongst the perished teachers of that tragedy. # Mr. R. N. Ganju also acknowledged with gratefulness the helping attitude of the <sup>Rev.</sup> Biscoe's, particularly, when their delapidated house was got repaired by

deavour. (a) Not only this, the <sup>Biscoe & family</sup> maintained special rapport with the orphan children of the deceased persons. When, once Nana Batur's son (Mr Dwarika Nath Kaul)'s difficulty in the Sheikh Bagh School came to his knowledge, he instantly had him put in the Central School at Fateh Kadal. which was effected without any delay.

When I have narrated to you before the godly nature of a person like Rev. C. E. Tyndale Biscoe, a flash of sorrowful scene comes before my eyes. Having bidden farewell to my <sup>mother</sup> ~~state~~ - KASHMIR - in December 1946, I used to still get thrilled when I used to have a glimpse of the Sheikh Bagh School and the Central School at Fateh Kadal, whenever, I visited Kashmir in the Summer months. My last visit to Kashmir in March/April, 1982, brought a sorrowful view <sup>to</sup> when I saw the whole <sup>central</sup> school building razed to the ground with only a portion in the corner having "News Boards" in tact. As if this was not enough, a heart-hurting sight, <sup>another</sup> ~~spectacle~~ was in my view. Though, a new Bridge, christened as "BISCOE" bridge

had come up with the bust (of which nose and cheek portion was defaced) of Rev. Biscoe installed on it. What reward the miscreants got from this act? None, of course! "Oh Sanity! Shall thou ever dawn again on Kashmir and if so, when?" (Since 1982 I did not have the chance to visit Kashmir, I do not know whether the bust was got repaired and set in order).

I have narrated to you, Reader!, a number of participants with their roles played in the Wular Lake trip and other matters connected therewith. But, I have not done full justice to my uncle, Mr. Tara Chand. Not only was he at the vanguard of the trips to the Wular Lake, but he ferried Rev. Biscoe across the River Jhelum to the CMS Schools situated on its banks on the Visitors' Day or otherwise. On his onward or backward journey from Sheikh Bagh to the School and vice versa, we, the youngsters of his household, on their visits to the relatives living on the banks of the River, did spot him out. We used to say <sup>hello to him</sup> and wave our hands. He <sup>used to</sup> respond briskly to our calls and visit <sup>used to</sup> us (with Rev. Biscoe) on the bank. While he always carressed <sup>us</sup>, Rev. Biscoe talked to us in a joyful mood and <sup>then</sup> go into a laughter. We got very much thrilled on such occasions. Mr. Tara Chand was one of the members on the Staff establishment of Rev. Biscoe. I often questioned my uncle about Mr. Biscoe's daily routines. One day he told me about an interesting situation like this - Mr. Biscoe had received a communication from abroad. Its reply, which was to be despatched within a period of four hours in consultation with St. Joseph's College Authorities, Baramullah, was its essential feature. Mr. Tara Chand was picked up for this errand. He took his bicycle and rushes to Baramullah. Obtaining the views of that college quickly, he returned to Sheikh Bagh with jet speed much before the ZERO HOUR. Rev. Biscoe was immensely pleased with him. For acknowledging his brave feat he was awarded a hundred-rupee note, ~~a rare commodity then~~. So, Reader! I am not exaggerating that in him, one found a 'STEEL MAN' with colossal stamina. He was a valiant figure not fearing to face such odds, as he did, when he along with Rev. Biscoe was busy in the dark, searching out missing persons. He was also given the charge of boat-shed, housing about twenty boats. He looked after the maintenance of these boats. Further, I am fully confident that he might have crossed the Dal/Wular Lakes several

times, otherwise, he could not find <sup>his placement</sup> and remain in the services of Mr. Biscoe's staff establishment. Of all the persons, (I would have very much liked his photograph embossed in this treatise. It is most unfortunate that I have not been able to procure one.) However, I fulfil my promise to you now. So, have a glimpse of the two (one of 'Nana Batuk' and the other of 'Ragav') photographs almost akin in extra curricular, particularly, physical activities, as spelt out with other special features of their personalities sketched out in the closed blocks here.

## P H O T O G R A P H S

OF

MR. RUGH NATH ZALPURI

MR. NANK CHAND KAUL

BIRTH YEAR

1889 (Guess) | 1898

DEATH YEAR

1937 | 1934.

BODY BUILD

Tall with a normal body | Tall (6'+) with a robust body

APPEARANCE

Partially sober otherwise in a happy mood | Impressive always in jovial mood with smiling lips

TRAINING COURSES

Deputed for Physical Training Instructors Course to Ambala | Deputed for Carpentry Courses

SPECIAL FEATURES  
&  
EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

1. Master for Mass Drills, Group Drills, marching and general teacher.
2. Sports and games Instructor - athletics, aquatics, gymnastics (for Girls School also), and aerobatics and mountain trekking.
3. Swimmer and diver, par excellence, risk controller for jumping and diving boys in the River Jhelum facing the Central (Fateh) Kadal School on Visitors' day.
4. Kitchen Manager - for Old Boys Association community Feasts, Yearly Wular Trips, Trekking expeditions to Kolahai Glacier Mahadev & Zabarwan mountains & Picnics to Mughal Gardens, Almond Orchards & Hari Parbat slopes in March / April.
5. Was named 'RAGAV' and given Sorbiquet of COOK

- 1) First Scout Master in Kashmir
- 2) Swimmer of eminence with super reputation
- 3) Diver without any parallel. Played 'Duck' by covering head with lake weeds avoiding identification thereby dodging capture by paddled-rowed boats participating in Duck race on the Tuesday regatta.
- 4) First person in Kashmir to make a boat to be plyed with cycle paddles
- 5) Sportsman - all rounder and general teacher
- 6) Master Carpenter in Technical and Vocational branch of the Central (Fateh Kadal) School
- 7) Love and fun making with children, their initiator to swimming
- 8) His second Motto "Love and Kindness to animals."
- 9) Given Sorbiquet of 'DUCK'

Reader! I have already told you earlier that our stay at Banizyar was, perhaps, for <sup>not</sup> more than ten days till last drowned corpse was thrown up from its stuck-up position in the Lake-bottom. Having lost seven young and precious lives and also all paddles (~~Sim only~~), of one of the Six-Oared Boats we left our Base Camp at Banizyar with heavy hearts for our return journey. The reverse current of the River Thelum put impediments in our speed. I somehow recollect now that it took us about four days to reach our home. Of this trip I reminisce that on the third day of our travel, I helped the Boatman in flying the Doonga upstream to whatever extent my capacity allowed. Being encouraged by Mr. Tara Chand, my uncle, I (though then of about 8-9 years of age) shared in the Boatman's struggle for maintaining upstream speed of the Doonga. Both of us had about 3" inch wide cotton tapes round our chests tied to one end of a thick rope, other end of which was tied to the steel hook fastened at the extremity of the front portion of the Doonga. We pulled the Doonga up, while walking in a formation with rhythmical steps, on the right side bank of the River thus speeding up against the current, while the Boatman's wife remained alert steering the Doonga. Mr. Tara Chand, my uncle, did also put in his part of work in having released our Doonga, as and when, it got stuck in the shallow or marshy patches of the River. On that day, we again passed near Noor Bagh, Cremation Ground, Chhatabad, which was on the left side of the River this time. Paying our obeisance here, we prayed for the peace of the departed souls of SEVEN young and valiant persons. For the Boatman, it was a tough battle to travel in current reverse direction. ~~Boat~~ <sup>he with my help</sup> <sup>more though not so swiftly</sup> of whatever capacity and strength it was, ~~made~~ <sup>made</sup> the Doonga. <sup>and even then</sup> slowly and steadily he reached the Weir Barrage late hours in the evening. So, this became our halting place after the third days' travel. Since during the whole day I was on the tip of my toes, I ~~remember~~ <sup>remember</sup> <sup>even now</sup> that in the supper I tasted cheese cooked in milk served with rice and chutni, so delightful a dish, not forgotten to this day. On the fourth day of the return trip we started from Weir Barrage early in the morning. We came back through the same route adopted while in forward journey. Thus, we touched the "Starting Point" on "Kralayar Nallah" roughly at about 3.00 pm or so. It took us some time to reach our

home - sweet home. All of us got busy to carry our luggage to our home at Karapora Khushki. The Boatman and hamals (engaged on payment basis) carried our heavier things to home. We cheered the Boatman and his wife on their departure to their destination.

No sooner did we arrive, a word went round our area. Our neighbours rushed in groups to welcome us. My friends also came and were happy to receive us. The neighbours felicitated the elders. They expressed their thankfulness to Almighty for our safe return.

Now settled as we were at our home, hordes of our relatives - near and far off ones - also visited our home and felicitated our elders and prayed for their long life (particularly, of Mr. Tara Chand, my uncle, for his namesake had perished in the Wular Lake storm on 11.4.1934). A large number of Teaching Fraternity / Staff Members also did come to our house to express their sympathies and gratefulness to Him for our safe return.

I will take you to School Side particularly the Teachers Fraternity. On their part an admirable exercise of composing an eulogical <sup>\* in Urdu</sup> poem was undertaken. Roughly in July / August, 1934 a poem expressed in a sorrowful and touching stanzas was prepared and set to music into a sober tone. (Whether one Teacher or a group of Teachers had done it was not known). A day was set in every week for the Schools to offer it as a prayer. It was played on flutes and drums by the School bands and sung in unison by the other boys. (I, myself, being a flute player of the School Band Group, still remember the relevant time). It is not possible for me to say how long this prayer was continued to be sung in the Schools. To put the thing straight, I take the opportunity to repeat the first line (which only I remember to date) --- CHHAYI HAIN KAALI GHATAYAEN ABRAE-e-KOHSAR PAR (literal translation --- Dreadful black clouds have spread over the lower portions of mountain ranges covered with dense clouds) which resound in my ear till this date.

Ft. note \* After receipt of the Log from Dr. Hugh (S/o Mr. Eric T. Biscoe) Australia reproduced in the pages later, it is found to contain the poem in question.